

D. Mamin-Sibiryak **THE TALE**
OF THE BRAVE HARE

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THE TALE OF THE BRAVE HARE

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DEEP IN THE WOOD A HARE WAS BORN. HE WAS SCARED ALL THE TIME. A TWIG GAVE A CRACK SOMEWHERE, A BIRD TOOK WING, SOME SNOW FELL FROM A BRANCH—AND THE HARE WAS ALREADY GASPING FOR BREATH FROM FRIGHT.

THE HARE WAS SCARED FOR A DAY AND FOR ANOTHER DAY.

HE WAS SCARED FOR A WEEK AND FOR A YEAR, BUT THEN HE GREW UP AND ALL OF A SUDDEN GOT TIRED OF BEING SCARED.

"I'M NOT AFRAID OF ANYBODY," HE SHOUTED AT THE TOP OF HIS VOICE. "I'M NOT A LITTLE BIT AFRAID, AND THAT'S THAT."

NOW ALL THE OLD HARES, AND THE YOUNG HARES, AND THE ELDERLY DOES GATHERED TOGETHER TO LISTEN TO THE CROSS-EYED, LONG-EARED, BOB-TAILED HARE BOASTING. THEY COULD NOT BELIEVE THEIR EARS—IT WAS INCREDIBLE THAT A HARE WAS NOT AFRAID OF ANYBODY.

"HEY THERE, CROSS-EYES, AREN'T YOU AFRAID OF THE WOLF?" SOMEBODY CALLED OUT.

"NO, I'M NOT AFRAID OF THE WOLF, OR THE BEAR, OR THE FOX EITHER. I FEAR NOBODY!"

THIS WAS ODD INDEED. HIDING THEIR NOSES BEHIND THEIR FRONT PAWS, THE YOUNG HARES CHUCKLED, THE KINDLY DOES LAUGHED ALOUD, AND EVEN THE OLD HARES WHO HAD BEEN UNLUCKY ENOUGH TO FEEL THE FOX'S CLAWS OR THE WOLF'S TEETH SMILED TO THEMSELVES... WHAT A FUNNY ONE, OH DEAR, WHAT A VERY FUNNY HARE! AND SUDDENLY EVERYONE WAS FEELING MERRY. THEY BEGAN TO TURN SOMERSAULTS, LEAP AND BOUND, AND CHASE EACH OTHER AS IF THEY HAD GONE COMPLETELY CRAZY.

"THERE ISN'T MUCH TO TALK ABOUT," OUR HARE SHOUTED, FULL OF COURAGE SUCH AS THE OTHERS HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE. "WHEN I MEET THE WOLF, I'LL EAT HIM UP MYSELF!"

"OH, WHAT A FUNNY HARE! OH, WHAT A SILLY-BILLY!" THEY ALL LAUGHED.

EVERYBODY UNDERSTOOD THAT THE HARE WAS REALLY FUNNY AND SILLY, AND IT MADE THEM ALL LAUGH.

THE HARES KEPT SHOUTING ABOUT THE WOLF AND ALL OF A SUDDEN THERE HE WAS.

HE HAD BEEN WALKING IN THE WOOD ON WOLF'S BUSINESS, WHEN HE SUDDENLY FELT A PANG OF HUNGER. HE HAD JUST BEEN THINKING THAT IT WOULD BE NICE TO CATCH A HARE FOR BREAKFAST WHEN HE HEARD THE NOISE THE HARES WERE MAKING, AND GATHERED THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT HIM. HE





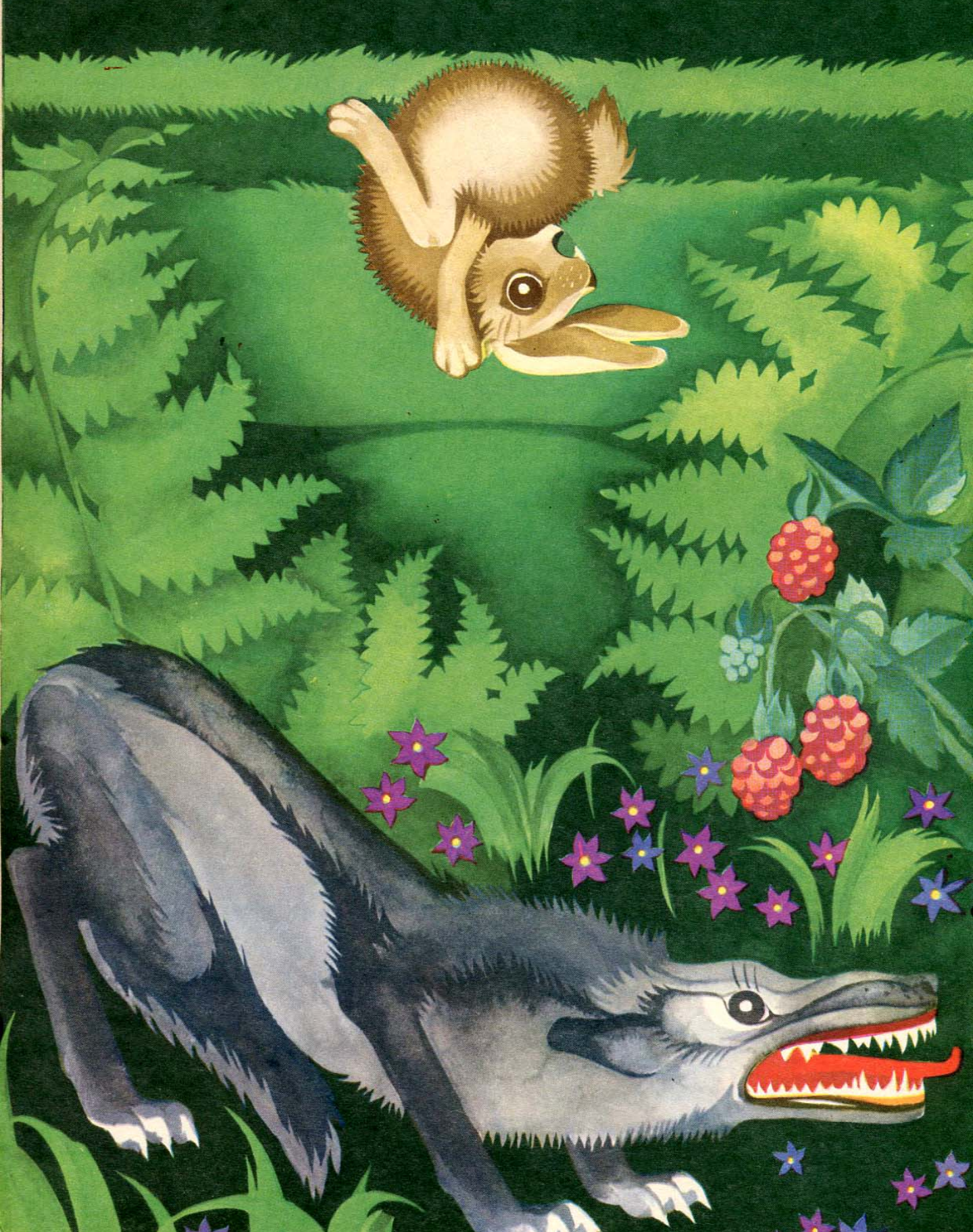
STOPPED AT ONCE, SNIFFED THE AIR, AND BEGAN TO STEAL TOWARD THEM.

THE WOLF APPROACHED THE FROLICKING HARES AND HEARD THEM MOCKING HIM. THE BRAGGART WAS LAUGHING LOUDEST.

"OHO, JUST YOU WAIT, YOU'RE THE ONE I'M GOING TO EAT



UP", THOUGHT THE WOLF, AND TRIED TO SEEK THE BRAGGART OUT. THE HARES DIDN'T NOTICE ANYTHING AND THEIR MERRIMENT WAS GROWING BY THE MINUTE. IT ALL ENDED WITH THE BRAGGART MOUNTING A STUMP, STRAIGHTENING HIMSELF UP AND SAYING, "LISTEN, YOU COWARDS! LISTEN AND LOOK AT ME!



I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU A TRICK. I'M ... I'M ... I'M ..." BUT THE NEXT WORDS STUCK IN HIS MOUTH AS HE SAW THE WOLF STARING AT HIM.

THE OTHER HARES DID NOT SEE THE WOLF. ONLY THE BRAGGART DID, AND HE DARED NOT UTTER A SOUND.

THEN THE OTHER HARES SAW SOMETHING THEY HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

THE BRAGGART BOUNCED UP LIKE A BALL, FELL DOWN ON THE WIDE FOREHEAD OF THE WOLF, ROLLED OVER HIS BACK, TURNED A SOMERSAULT IN THE AIR, AND TOOK TO HIS HEELS. IT LOOKED AS IF HE WANTED TO JUMP OUT OF HIS SKIN.

THE POOR HARE RAN ON AND ON AS LONG AS HE COULD, FEELING ALL THE TIME THAT THE WOLF WAS BEHIND HIM, READY TO SEIZE HIM BY THE SCRUFF OF HIS NECK.

AT LAST THE HARE COULD RUN NO MORE. HE CLOSED HIS EYES AND SANK BREATHLESSLY DOWN UNDER A BUSH.

AT THE SAME TIME THE WOLF WAS RACING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. WHEN THE HARE FELL ON HIS BACK, IT SEEMED TO HIM THAT SOMEBODY HAD SHOT AT HIM.

AND THE WOLF MADE A BOLT FOR IT. "THERE ARE PLENTY OF HARES IN THE WOOD," HE THOUGHT. "THAT ONE WAS RIGHT OUT OF HIS MIND ..."

IT TOOK THE OTHER HARES A LONG TIME TO RECOVER. SOME OF THEM HAD TAKEN COVER IN THE BUSHES, OTHERS HAD HIDDEN BEHIND STUMPS, STILL OTHERS HAD FOUND A TUSsock FOR SHELTER.

IN THE END THEY GOT TIRED OF HIDING AND THE BRAVER ONES STARTED TO PEEP AROUND.

"CROSS-EYES GAVE THE WOLF A REALLY GOOD SCARE!" THE HARES CHEERED IN ACCORD. "BUT FOR HIM, WE'D ALL HAVE LOST OUR LIVES. WHERE IS HE THEN, THAT BRAVE HARE OF OURS?"

AND THEY ALL BEGAN TO SEARCH FOR HIM. THEY LOOKED HERE AND THEY LOOKED THERE, BUT THE BRAVE HARE WAS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN. HAD ANOTHER WOLF DEVoured HIM? FINALLY THEY FOUND HIM LYING UNDER A BUSH, HARDLY BREATHING FOR FEAR.







"WELL DONE, CROSS-EYES!" ALL THE HARES SHOUTED IN CHORUS. "GOOD FOR YOU! YOU GAVE THE OLD WOLF A MIGHTY SCARE. THANK YOU, THANK YOU! WE REALLY THOUGHT AT FIRST THAT YOU WERE ONLY BRAGGING."

THE BRAVE HARE FELT ENORMOUSLY ENCOURAGED. HE



CLIMBED OUT OF THE HOLE, SHOOK HIMSELF, SCREWED UP HIS EYES AND SAID, "WELL, THAT'S WHAT YOU THOUGHT, YOU COWARDS!"

AND SINCE THAT DAY THE BRAVE HARE HIMSELF BELIEVED THAT HE WASN'T AFRAID OF ANYBODY AT ALL.

